

The Comical Historie of

Bass. I thank you Madam, give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is *Antonio*,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For as I heare he was much bound for you.

Anth. No more then I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appeare in other wayes then words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesie.

Grat. By yonder moone I sweare you do me wrong,
In faith I gave it to the Judges Clarke,
Would he were gelt that had it for my part,
Since you do take it Love so much at heart.

Por. A quarrell hoe already, what's the matter?

Grat. About a hoope of gold, a paltry Ring
That she did give me, whose posie was,
For all the world like Cutlers Poetry
Upon a knife, *Love me, and leave me not.*

Ner. What talke you of the posie or the value:
You swore to me when I did give it you,
That you would weare it till your houre of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave.
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oathes,
You should have been respectiue, and have kept it,
Gave it a Judges Clarke: no god's my judge,
The Clarke will nere weare haire on's face that had it.

Grat. He will, and if he live to be a man.

Nerrissa. I, if a woman live to be a man.

Grat. Now by this hand I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher then thy selfe, the Judges Clarke,
A prating boy that begg'd it as a fee,
I could not for my heart deny it him.

Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wives first gift,
A thing stuck on with oathes upon your finger,
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my Love a Ring, and made him sweare

Never

the Merchant of Venice.

Never to part with it; and here he stands,
I dare be sworne for him he would not leave it,
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world Masters. Now in faith *Gratiano*,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of griefe,
And 'twere to me I should be mad at it.

Bass. Why I were best to cut my left hand off,
And sweare I lost the Ring defending it.

Grat. My Lord *Bassanio* gave his Ring away
Unto the Judge that begg'd it, and indeed
Deserv'd it to: and then the boy his Clarke
That tooke some pains in writing, he begg'd mine,
And neither man nor master would take ought
But the two Rings.

Por. What Ring gave you my Lord?
Not that I hope which you receiv'd of me.

Bass. If I could adde a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it: but you see my finger
Hath not the Ring upon it, it is gone.

Por. Even so voyd is your false heart of truth.
By heaven I will nere come in your bed
Untill I see the Ring?

Ner. Nor I in yours
Till I againe see mine.

Bass. Sweet *Portia*,
If you did know to whom I gave the Ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the Ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the Ring,
And how unwillingly I left the Ring,
When naught would be accepted but the Ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had knowne the vertue of the Ring,
Or halfe her worthinesse that gave the Ring,
Or your own honour to containe the Ring,
You would not then have parted with the Ring:
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleas'd to have defended it
With any termes of zeale, wanted the modesty

I 3

To